Defence Minister's visit to Russia

*134. SHRI SURESH PACHOUR1: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Defence Minister was on official visit to Russia recently;

(b) if so, the objective behind the visit; and

(c) the outcome of his visit?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Defence Minister visited Russia to co-Chair the third meeting of the Indo-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission for Military Technical Cooperation held in Moscow from January 15-17,2003. During this visit he held discussions on a wide range of international and regional issues of mutual interest with the H.E. M.M. Kas'yanov, Chairman of the Government of the Russia Federation, H.E. I.S. Ivanov, Russian Foreign Minister, S.D. Ivanov, Russian Defence Minister and Vladimir Rushailo, National Security Council Adviser. During these discussions both sides re-affirmed and reinforced their commitment to the ongoing Indo-Russian strategic relationship deriving from a convergence of views relating to current international issues, including the problem of terrorism.

Infiltration of terrorists on Bangladeshi passport

†*135: SHRI BALKAVIBAIRAGI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that ISI, the infamous agency of Pakistan has devised a new way of infiltrating terrorists into India under fake identity after the tightening of security by India on border;

(b) whether it is also a fact that now ISI is infiltrating terrorists on the passports of Bangladesh; and

(c) if replies to (a) and (b) above be in the affirmative, the steps taken by Government to keep a check on such activities alongwith the details thereof?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI HARIN PATHAK): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Available inputs indicate that Pakistan has been attempting to infiltrate agents through the porous Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bangladesh borders under the assumed identity.

(c) The concerns of the Government with regard to infiltration through Bangladesh and Indo-Nepal borders have been shared with the Governments of Bangladesh and Nepal respectively. Both the Governments have assured that they would not allow their territories to be used for activities inimical to India's interests.

In order to check ISI activities in the country, the Government has adopted a well-coordinated and multi-pronged approach which includes stregthening the border management, galvanizing the intelligence machinery, neutralizing plans of ISI by well-coordinated intelligence based operations and modernisation and upgradation of State police and Central security forces. Besides, a number of joint Working Groups have been set up with various countries including Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar for information sharing and combating trans-border crime and terrorism.

Facilities for families of soldiers martyred by the terrorists

†*136. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state;

(a) whether the families of soldiers martyred by the terrorists are proposed to be provided with the facilities at par with those martyred in wars;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons for treating them differently?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) The families of Armed Forces Personnel killed by terrorists are given similar benefits as admissible to the families of personnel killed in war or war like situation except in respect of *ex-gratia* compensation. Families of personnel killed in war/war like engagements are paid an *ex-gratia* of Rs. 10 lakhs and of those killed by the terrorists or in action against terrorists, etc. are paid *ex-gratia* of Rs. 7.5 lakhs. This distinction

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.